

APPROVED: Meeting No. 20-90

ATTEST: *Sharon A. Dean*

MAYOR AND COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND
Meeting No. 18-90

April 30, 1990

The Mayor and Council of Rockville, Maryland, convened in Special Session in the Council Chamber, Rockville City Hall, Maryland Avenue at Vinson Street, Rockville, Maryland, on April 30, 1990, at 7:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Douglas M. Duncan

Councilmember James F. Coyle

Councilmember Viola D. Hovsepien

Councilmember James T. Marrinan

Councilmember David Robbins

In attendance: City Manager Bruce Romer, City Clerk Sharon Gran and City Attorney Paul Glasgow.

Re: Citizens' Forum

At this time, the Mayor opened the meeting to hear from any citizen who wished to address the Mayor and Council.

1. Brodie Mullican, 1947 Lewis Avenue, briefed the Mayor and Council regarding the recent Girls Basketball Exchange with Pinneberg which took place April 6 through April 14. Mr. Mullican thanked the Sister City Corporation, staff and all those who contributed to make the trip possible. The Mayor and Council were presented with pictures to be placed in the Pinneberg Room of the Civic Center Mansion.

2. Ronald Rehm, 606 Mannakee Street, referenced a recent letter he and his neighbors have received from Linda MacDermid indicating that their house numbers would be changed. He presented a petition with 31 signatures and requested a meeting with the City Manager and Linda MacDermid to discuss this matter. The City Manager indicated

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that he would schedule such a meeting.

3. Jackie Williams, 132 South Adams Street, expressed concern with safety of the storm water pond adjacent to Christ Episcopal Church and School. She indicated that this has been a problem since September 1987, and remains unresolved.

Mayor Duncan responded that the Mayor and Council have also raised concerns regarding this matter and discussed it with staff. A number of attempts by the City to correct this problem have been unsuccessful. This issue will be raised during budget deliberations to determine how it can be successfully resolved.

There being no other citizen wishing to address the Mayor and Council, the Mayor closed the Citizens' Forum portion of the meeting.

Re: Presentation of Proposed
FY1991 Operating Budget and
FY1991-96 Capital Improvements
Program

The City Manager formally transmitted the FY1991 budget to the Mayor and Council, noting that a number of copies would be mailed to interested groups in the community within the next few days. Mr. Romer acknowledged the continued team effort and the efforts of all staff, especially Donna Rice and Chris Freel of the Budget Division, in preparing the budget.

An overview of the budget was presented which included the following:

- o projected 3.8% growth in General Fund revenues;
- o hold-the-line budget--no new positions;
- o no significant program expansion;
- o maintain high quality of existing programs; and
- o guided by vision expressed by Goals Task Force.

Among the factors highlighted regarding the Economic Climate were: a regional slowdown; a rise in office vacancy rates; a strong economic base; a large Capital

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Improvements Program; and the fact that the pay-as-you go commitment holds down debt issuance requirements.

Responses to the Goals Task Force Recommendations incorporated in the proposed budget include:

- o Business Watch program;
- o directed patrols;
- o substance abuse education;
- o Super Service;
- o child care programs; and
- o substance abuse education.

The following City-Community Partnerships were featured:

- o joint effort with Chamber of Commerce to organize Hometown Holidays celebration;
- o substance abuse education programs aimed at Community Action teams, civic associations and school groups;
- o new Lincoln Park substation to be Community Drop-In Center for contact with City and County officials; and
- o "Grandma Please" latchkey program in conjunction with Rockville Seniors, Inc.

Town Center issues include:

- o promotion of Town Center through contract with The Adams Group;
- o Town Center Economic Development Plan; and
- o Continued emphasis on sale of City property for appropriate development.

The proposed property tax rate for FY1991 is \$.83 per \$100 of assessed valuation, the same rate as FY1990, which represents the lowest tax rate since 1969. Debt service comprises 19% of the proposed budget, an increase over last year as a result of the \$10 million in General Obligation Bonds recently sold to finance capital

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improvement projects. Although modest increases in the sewer and water rates are proposed in order to accommodate operating costs, these rates are still significantly less than those charged by WSSC. The refuse rate has two components: the cost of collection, which is controlled by the City, and the cost of disposal, which is set by the County. The tipping fees passed on to the City by the County have increased by 70% over the last five years.

Insofar as revenues are concerned, property taxes comprise 58% of the General Fund revenues and State-shared revenues 21%.

The Capital Improvements Program is submitted as part of the operating budget with 100 projects proposed for funding and 72 carry-over projects. The "hold-the-line theme" is applicable for the Capital Improvements Program as well. A video presentation followed featuring a number of capital improvement projects such as the Municipal Swim Center expansion and the West Montgomery Avenue improvements project.

In summary, Mr. Romer stated that the City will continue its high level of service; there would be no tax rate increase; and the budget represents a fiscally sound plan for the future.

Mayor Duncan requested that information be provided as to what the average homeowner's tax bill would be next fiscal year.

Re: FYI/Correspondence

With respect to the City Hall Space Study Update, Councilmember Hovsepian asked if a new date has been scheduled. The City Manager commented that a new date would be scheduled.

Regarding the State Discretionary Grants, Mayor Duncan noted that there are three separate programs involved and requested that staff ensure that the City is applying for the appropriate grant.

Mayor Duncan stated that the Twinbrook Safeway would be closing on Saturday,

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May 5. The building is to be demolished and the new store should open by July of next year.

Re: Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council in Special Session, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. to reconvene in Worksession at 8:50 p.m.

Re: Worksession with
Advisory Commission on
Public Education

Naomi Resnick, Chairperson, and members of the Advisory Commission on Public Education discussed the following issues with the Mayor and Council:

1. Recommended Charter Objective Changes. Regarding a change in the Charter from "create" to "maintain" a Rockville presence before the Board of Education, discussion followed as to how often Commission members attend Board meetings and when and if they provide testimony. Commission members indicated that they keep abreast of Board activities through a review of the agendas as well as the minutes. If there are items on the agenda of concern to Rockville, one or more of the Commission members may attend the meeting. Additionally, the Commission has been invited to attend the Area 2 meetings to review elementary school needs in the Richard Montgomery cluster.

Councilmember Coyle asked if the Commission should consider going beyond the high school level and include Montgomery College in their work plan. Mayor Duncan requested that staff come back with a recommendation.

2. Chamber of Commerce/ACPE Committee. The following four programs were recommended to the Chamber of Commerce by Commission members to further the business/education partnership:

- a. Career Skills Training Expo.
- b. Business Resource Program. Mrs. Resnick encouraged City staff to participate in the program. It was agreed that information would be disseminated through

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Rockville Reports.

c. Career Internships Program.

d. School Support Program.

3. Richard Montgomery Cluster Long-Term Elementary School Needs Meeting.

As mentioned earlier, Dr. Shekletski has convened a Task Force to make recommendations to the Superintendent in June regarding long-term elementary school needs in the Richard Montgomery cluster. Stacy Wood from Planning and Robert Ekman of the Commission have been attending and monitoring the meetings, and Mayor Duncan requested that the Mayor and Council be kept informed. Mrs. Resnick noted that the Task Force is studying the possibility of reopening closed schools. With respect to Woodley Gardens (the Senior Center), the City Manager confirmed that the State owns the school and that a full report regarding this facility is forthcoming.

4. Commission Membership Representation. Concern was expressed for a geographic representation and balance on the Commission. With two current vacancies and another two imminent, Mayor Duncan indicated that he would send letters to PTAs and cluster coordinators for recommendations for membership on the Commission.

Rather than holding a dinner meeting with the Board of Education as was done last year, it was suggested that a less formal reception be held in the fall following the election. In addition to Board of Education members, student government presidents and principals would be invited to attend.

Re: Worksession with
Sign Review Board

Douglas Worthing, Chairman, Donald Johnson and Leo Stein of the Sign Review Board and Michael Wolff, Chairman of the Town Center Roundtable Subcommittee, discussed the following sign issues with the Mayor and Council:

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1. Off Site Signs. Regarding the Flagship Car Wash, Mayor Duncan noted that the sign on Route 355 gives a cluttered appearance and asked if these types of signs are permitted in other parts of the City and if a "no stopping" sign could be erected instead. The City Manager responded that the sign can probably be taken down now but that they would experiment first.

Mr. Johnson indicated that Section 3-602(b) of the Sign Ordinance should provide for a minimum building lot or aggregate building area to warrant a sign, suggesting 50,000 square feet or a 5-acre site. Mayor Duncan requested that staff review this proposal. It was recommended that Section 3-602(b) be amended to allow off-site signs by consent of the property owner, provided the sign area be assessed against the area allowance for the lot upon which the sign is erected.

2. Freestanding identification signs. It was recommended that Section 3-602(b) be amended to allow freestanding identification signs in the I-3, Town Center, and O-1 Zones to identify more than one business, place, organization, building or person. A further amendment would limit these signs in the I-3 Zone to identification of up to four individual tenants per sign using a maximum of six-inch high graphics for tenant names.

3. Sale, lease or rent signs in the I-3 Zone. Discussion followed regarding the ramifications of allowing renewals for sale, lease or rent signs subsequent to the original two-year term. It was suggested that upon expiration of the two-year period, application would be made to the Sign Review Board which would have authority over the design and placement of the sign. Reducing the sign from 48 square feet to 24 square feet was discussed as well as making leasing signs applicable in all zones.

Staff was requested to incorporate these recommendations into suggested amendments to the law taking into consideration provisions for loss of major tenants.

4. Temporary construction signs. It was agreed that Section 3-609(d)(2) be

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amended to permit one sign identifying the contractor, architect and/or lending institution during the period of construction of a building. The sign would be limited to a maximum area of 72 square feet.

5. Building signs in the Town Center and O-1 Zones. Councilmember Hovsepian commented on the need to require address numbers on store fronts along Rockville Pike. Mayor Duncan noted that the City will be putting up directional signs in the Town Center. It was agreed that Section 3-609(a)(4) be amended to allow buildings occupied by two or more businesses/tenants to have building identification signs on any exterior wall that has frontage on a public right-of-way.

6. Freestanding monument signs. It was agreed that Section 3-610 be amended to provide for freestanding monument signs in the Town Center and O-1 Zones not to exceed three feet in width for any face and six feet in height. Staff was requested to insert in the proposed language a setback requirement. Mayor Duncan also requested that Metro's freestanding monument signs be measured.

7. Temporary signs in the Town Center and O-1 Zones. It was agreed that Section 3-610(e) be amended to modify regulations on sale, lease or rent signs, construction signs, and grand opening banners, pennants and displays. More restrictive requirements are applied to sale and lease signs for renewals, and grand opening banners and displays would be allowed for a longer period of time.

8. Authority of Sign Review Board to allow certain prohibited signs. Discussion ensued regarding the difference between filing a text amendment and coming before the Sign Review Board. Mayor Duncan requested that staff determine the number of requests for signs that are prohibited over a period of a year. It was agreed that staff would make recommendations regarding an appropriate review mechanism for prohibited signs for Mayor and Council consideration at a later time.

Rev. Mansfield Kaseman brought to the attention of the Mayor and Council and

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Board members that certain congregations hold meetings open to the general public and, because of the location of the churches and the lack of directional signs, individuals have difficulty finding the churches and, thus, do not attend the meetings. Staff noted the problems in placing signs off-site or in the right-of-way. Mayor Duncan requested that staff review this situation and offer some recommendations for the Mayor and Council as to how situations such as Rev. Kaseman described can be resolved.

Re: Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m., to convene again in Worksession at 7:00 p.m. on May 1, 1990, or at the call of the Mayor.